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NHTSA-200-7580-6 NPS01
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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

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RECEIVED
JUN 27 1999
FBI
WASHINGTON, DC

May 18, 2000

Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street S.W.
Washington DC 20590

Greetings:

The purpose of this letter is to add support to Elizabeth Fisher's proposed Amendment to SEC.571.209 Standard No. 209, Seat Belt Assemblies, and specifically Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 49CFR571.209 which governs the manufacture of seat belt assemblies, and which proposed amendment was filed in accordance with procedures set forth in 49CFR552.

I recently learned that the NHTSA regulation for seatbelts in automobiles require that they accommodate only persons who weigh less than 215 pounds and are shorter than 6 feet. Since so many Americans exceed this limit, this requirement is alarmingly deficient. Although those limits are purported to represent the 95th percentile of U.S. adult males, scientific studies indicate that many more people exceed that size in their body mass index. Further, since almost all states require drivers and passengers to buckle up, the limitation forces many people to break their state law.

Although some (but not all: e.g. Honda and Subaru) manufacturers do provide seatbelt extenders, those devices fit only their respective cars. This may help the oversized owners of those cars and their passengers, but it does not help the oversized passengers who ride in their thinner friends' cars. Many larger people are simply too uncomfortable making an issue about securing their seatbelts while riding in someone else's car, so they simply and quietly (and nervously!) remain exposed to potential severe personal injury.

Please help protect the safety and lives of the many Americans who weigh more than 215 pounds and who drive and ride the highways. Please require automobile manufacturers to provide a means for *all* passengers to fasten their seatbelts. If a car is large enough to hold a person of size, its equipment should also assure his/her safety just as well as the safety of a thinner person. Thank you.

Yours truly,



Antonia Richie